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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - FEBRUARY 5

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¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

CNDP Transformed Into Political Party?

¶2. (SBU) The CNDP reaffirmed at a February 4 press conference in Goma that the movement had abandoned its arm struggle and will devote its energy to the political process in the DRC. The CNDP, with Desire Kamanzi as President of the party, called for a continuation of the Nairobi talks to concentrate on unresolved political questions; it also called on the GDRC to appoint a Minister for Community Affairs and National Reconciliation.

¶3. (SBU) The CNDP recommended that the GDRC grant a general amnesty for acts of war committed until January 16, 2009 - the date on which the movement announced it would cease military action. The former rebel group also called for the convocation of a National Cultural Conference with the aim of fostering better understanding amongst the various Congolese ethnic groups.

¶4. (SBU) Addressing the fate of Bosco Ntaganda, the new CNDP political leadership acknowledged that they did not want to impede justice. However, they argued that the fact that Bosco had contributed so much to the peace process should also be considered.

¶5. (SBU) In addition to Kamanzi, there were other well-known CNDP figures at the press conference, including Kambasu Ngeye. However, other senior CNDP officials, most notably Rene Abandi and Bertrand Bismwa, were absent.

DRC-Rwandan Joint Operations

¶6. (SBU) A MONUC military spokesman reported that FARDC-RDF troops have deployed west of Nyamilima, with another group of RDF re-deploying east of Mabinga, near Virunga National Park. A third deployment took place at Bambo, north of Goma. MONUC Goma reported that the RDF had also deployed westward towards Pete in Walikale Territory, apparently pursuing FDLR forces. The MONUC spokesman said that no major combat occurred between FARDC/RDF forces and FDLR elements over the last week. There were, however, reports that FARDC/RDF elements looted several houses and businesses in Nyamilima on January 28-29.

DDRRR/Repatriation Developments

¶7. (SBU) MONUC Spokesman Madnodje Mounoubai announced that between January 4 and February 3, MONUC had repatriated 335 FDLR combatants, 137 ex-combatants, and 198 dependents. Since the accelerated military integration process began in North Kivu, many child soldiers have left Mai Mai groups, according to Mounoubai. MONUC demobilized 195 children last week in Rumangabo, Rutshuru, and Nyakale. Mounoubai cautioned, however, that numerous children are still active in armed groups. MONUC has deployed DRRR bases in Masisi, Rutshuru, Walikale, Kanyabayonga, Gungu, Lubero, Beni, and Goma in North Kivu; in Bukavu, Bunyakiri, Uvira, and Barak in South Kivu.

¶8. (SBU) UNHCR Deputy Representative for Protection Mohamed Toure told PolCouns and Poloff February 5 that UNHCR had repatriated approximately 800 civilians over the last ten days. While this was a sizable number, Toure cautioned that some of these had almost certainly "recycled" back to tap UNHCR benefits. In the last 6-7 days, Toure said that UNHCR had received an average of 200 civilians per day. UNHCR, which has established ten transit centers in the Kivus, processes the cases within two days, according to Toure.

Humanitarian Issues -----

¶9. (SBU) According to a representative of OCHA, most IDPs in North Kivu are eager to return to their villages. Some have returned home to Kanombe, Rugari, and Kivumba. Nevertheless, a significant number of IDPs have decided to wait to return home until after any fighting

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has ended and after the RDF have returned to Rwanda. Humanitarian organizations have updated contingency plans in anticipation of FARDC/RDF military action against the FDLR.

¶10. (SBU) As reported in reftel, local populations from the Haut Plateau region near Kalehe continue to fear FDLR reprisals, and have displaced to Rushushu, Luzira, Rambira, Kalungu. According to the Deputy Administrator of Kalehe, most of the IDPs are in need of food assistance.

¶11. (SBU) MONUC announced that the first two of five planned UN Joint Protection Teams had deployed to Walikale and Masisi Town. The remaining three teams will be at Kanyabayonga, along the Nyamilima axis in Rutshuru, and, potentially, at Pinga in Masisi Territory.

¶12. (SBU) Radio Okapi reported that eight people were killed and three injured following a mudslide at the Kilimani IDP camp near Masisi. A heavy, steady rain caused the mudslide.

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